

MHCLG names first female chief planner

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The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has revealed its new chief planner, replacing Steve Quartermain who stepped down earlier this year.



Joanna Averley: the new government chief planner.

This morning, a statement from MHCLG reveals that Joanna Averley, a former *Planning* columnist, will take on the post from September, becoming the first female chief planner.

Averley, a chartered town planner, joins MHCLG from High Speed Two Ltd where she has been head of urban design and integration for the government-backed delivery body for the last two years.

The statement said that Averley "has worked as a town planner for nearly 30 years in and with local and central government and its agencies, as well as within the private and third sectors".

"Her experience includes planning policy, major projects, design quality in the built and natural environment, complex planning applications, urban design and masterplanning, economic development and regeneration," it adds.

Averley's previous roles include: strategic manager for growth and development for mayoral agency Transport for London on the proposed Crossrail 2 project; deputy CEO of and director of design and planning advice at the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE); CEO and trustee of think tank Centre for Cities; and director of design for the Olympic Delivery Authority.

She was also director of planning, development and regeneration at property firm GVA, now Avison Young and a chief executive of property industry charity LandAid.

Averley said: "We have many challenges to address over the coming months and years – how we meet the needs of our communities in delivering good quality homes and neighbourhoods, underpinning the economy and jobs, delivering sustainable patterns of growth, addressing the climate crisis and adapting to the realities of the pandemic and its consequences.

"Planning and planners have a vital role to play – a creative, proactive approach and long-term thinking will be at the heart of bringing positive change for all.

"I greatly look forward to taking up the role of chief planner and working with colleagues across the built environment professions to address these challenges and opportunities."

Quartermain [stood down](#) as chief planner at the end of March after 12 years in the position.

Roger Hepher, director of planning consultancy hgh Consulting, said: "We're delighted to hear of the appointment of Joanna Averley as the first female chief planner. She has a great reputation as a focused but pragmatic planner, and a keen advocate of design quality.

"Joanna is taking up a challenging position at a critical time, as the ministry not only acts to keep the planning system running and facilitating development, but also addresses some potentially far-reaching reforms."